

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 01691 291403Z

53

ACTION IO-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2810

INFO AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1691

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LU, AG

SUBJ: ALGERIANS AND PRIME MINISTER THORN

REF: LUXEMBOURG 0564

1. ALGERIAN NEGATIVE REACTION TO PRIME MINISTER THORN'S DESIRE FOR MEETING WITH BOUTEFLIKA WHICH REPORTED REFTEL IS INTERESTING. WE UNCERTAIN HOW TO EXPLAIN IT. PROPRIETY IS NOT BIG ITEM WITH ALGERIANS AND WE THINK REASON FOR PUTTING THORN OFF SHOULD BE SOUGHT ELSEWHERE.

2. BOUTEFLIKA INDEED UNAVAILABLE LATE JULY OR EARLY AUGUST. HE REPORTEDLY HAS GONE OFF (OR IS GOING) TO SWITZERLAND FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT AND REST. MEMBER HIS CABINET HAS DESCRIBED HIM AS BEING "TRES, TRES FATIGUE" AND AS OVERBURDENED WITH RESPONSIBILITIES. HE HAS HISTORY OF KIDNEY AILMENT, WE ARE TOLD, AND THAT MAY BE GIVING HIM TROUBLE. THERE IS ALSO USUAL CYNICAL SPECULATION THAT HE BEING SENT OUT OF COUNTRY WHILE BOUMEDIENE IN KAMPALA BECAUSE LATTER DOES NOT TRUST HIM.

3. WE DISCOUNT SUCH SPECULATION, ALTHOUGH JUST HOW HIGH
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 01691 291403Z

BOUTEFLIKA IS IN BOUMEDIENE'S ESTIMATION TODAY IS A VERY

LIVELY QUESTION ON THE COCKTAIL CIRCUIT. HE CERTAINLY IS NOT MUCH IN EVIDENCE (HE DID NOT APPEAR FOR THE VISITS OF THE MEXICAN PRESIDENT OR THE PERUVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, FOR INSTANCE), BUT THAT IS NOTHING NEW. IT IS JUST POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS HE DOES NOT WANT TO BE EMBARRASSED AT THIS TIME BY WHAT WOULD BE ESSENTIALLY PERSONAL VISIT BY THORN, WHATEVER ITS PROTOCOL STATUS.

4. IT ALSO POSSIBLE ALGERIANS ARE COOKING UP SOMETHING AND DO NOT WANT TO BE IN POSITION OF APPEARING ENDORSE THORN'S CANDIDACY.

5. IT MAY SIMPLY BE THAT BOUTEFLIKA DISLIKES THORN, OR DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE TIME FROM HIS OTHER PURSUITS FOR PROTOCOL CHORES ENTAILED BY VISIT.

6. IT MAY BE NONE OF THESE.
PARKER

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